

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Tom Schmid

Greetings,

Although as I write this column it is still below freezing outside, I am beginning to feel as though spring is just around the corner. I think that's mainly because of all the planning we are currently engaged in as we begin to move into our busy season. From final design

work for our new RV campground at The Wilds, to planning for our new weedy sea dragons here at the Zoo, to a new entrance at Zoombezi Bay, there is so much happening at your Columbus Zoo Family of Parks.

As I shared last month, we are working through the conceptual design phase for a major update to our North America region. Under phase one we will be creating an entirely new habitat for our otters and beavers, and for our bear and wolf collection. These are areas that our

guests will experience at the beginning of the journey, and we are excited to get these projects underway as soon as possible. Our goal is to complete all design and engineering work this year, and then begin construction in 2023 and open the habitat in 2024.

We are also engaging in some preliminary design work for near term improvements to our bonobo indoor holding areas, and long term we are planning for an entirely new Congo experience.

I will keep all of you advised as we move forward on these and other projects.

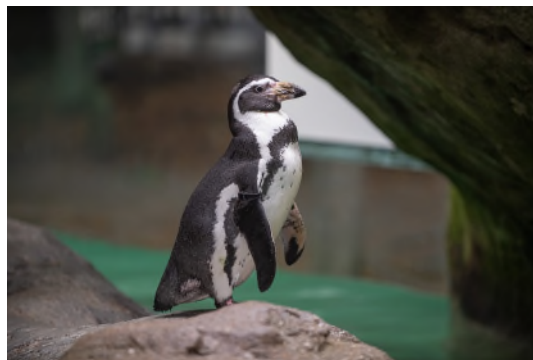
Thank you for your dedicated service, and I look forward to seeing you around the Zoo.

Tom Schmid, President/CEO

Photo courtesy of Graham S. Jones, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

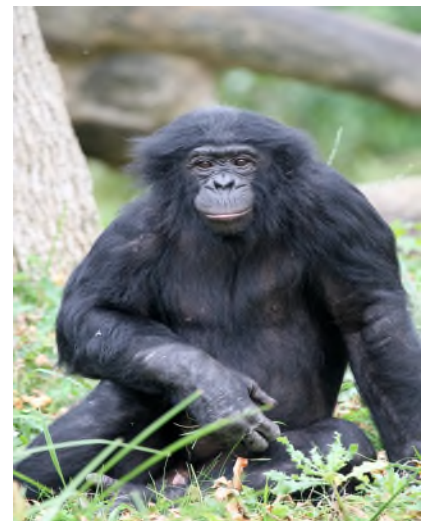


*Remembering
Montana*



Remembering Chi Chi

Photo of Montana courtesy of Columbus Zoo and Aquarium; photo of Chi Chi courtesy of Amanda Carberry, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium; photo of Toby courtesy of Audra Meinelt



Remembering Toby

REGION NEWS—ANIMAL PROGRAMS

Preparation for the busy season in this animal contact area has begun. On Feb. 21, a virtual training session for the Adventure Cove Deck and Tunnel area was led by Brianne Warthman and Erin Schuler of the Education Department. Another will be held on Mar. 6. Tuesday night Zoom meetings with presenters Shawn Brehob, Pablo Joury and the Animal Programs training staff providing updates about the animals in their care are scheduled for May 24, July 19, Sept. 6 and Oct. 25. Join us!

Though the Adventure Cove Deck closes at times due to cold and wintry weather, it's still possible to see the **harbor seals** and **sea lions** zooming around in the North and Central pools from the warmth of the Adventure Cove Tunnel. Part of the transparent tunnel floor is covered with a mat to protect a damaged section. More mats were placed to create a path on the tunnel floor to reduce salt marks on the glass during the winter. The



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

glass is difficult to clean, especially because water cannot be used to assist in the process. Thus, the Zoo decided to create a path in the middle of the glass floor to reduce traffic directly on the glass. Guests will still have the opportunity to see animals travel under them on each side of the mat path. Volunteers and docents can greatly assist by encouraging guests to walk directly on the matted path as though it's a Hollywood red carpet. New mats will arrive each Friday.

Each animal receives a specific amount of food prepared specially for him or her daily. The smaller and younger sea lions compile an annual food bill of \$4,000 each whereas full-grown, big males such as Bodega, Nana and Qizai consume close to \$9,000 worth of food annually after taking winter and summer diet differences into consideration.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Davis

When warmer weather arrives, the cheetah/Watering Hole area will then be considered part of Heart of Africa for volunteer sign-up purposes, even though the Animal Programs team will retain care of the animals. Docents and volunteers formerly roaming inside and outside in Jack Hanna's Animal Encounters Village will be able to replace that role with a planned opportunity to assist in the tortoise yard walkabout instead.

The Zoo is going to be full of changes in 2022, but the dedication of the staff to the Animal Programs animals and their commitment to sharing information about them with us so we can add to the guest experience remains stronger than ever.

REGION NEWS—ASIA QUEST

After a cold and snowy time, things are warming up! The Asia Quest animals, like many of us, are ready for spring. Here are a few updates about them:

Silvered leaf langur Nutmeg surprised Care staff with a new baby on Feb. 7! So, just as little Raya is looking more like the rest of her troop, a new orange youngster has joined the breeding group.

Check out the photo below of new **Pallas' cat** Tiina. According to her keepers, she is shyer and fluffier than Moose. Another new resident in the region is **tufted deer** baby Angus. He was born on Nov. 26 and has



*Photo courtesy of Grahm S. Jones,
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium*



*Photo courtesy of Amanda Carberry,
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium*

been spending time with the other deer, including brother TJ.

Sloth bear Heiderose is back in the habitat after some behind-the-scenes time during which she did not have babies.

Currently in the **red panda** habitat are mom and daughter Kora and Santi. Plans are in place to introduce Madeline to them – stay tuned! Madeline can presently be seen in the outdoor langur yard but she will move once it's time for the langurs to go outside again.

Jupiter **Amur tiger** is still recovering from his tail wound behind the scenes but females Natasha (main habitat) and Mara (Tiger Boardwalk) can be seen daily.



*Photo courtesy of Grahm S. Jones,
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium*

Unsurprisingly, little Frankie **Asian elephant** continues to charm guests and his Care staff. He just weighed in at 915 pounds and recently experienced snow for the first time as did **greater one-horned rhino** Brian, who seemed a little skeptical.

We look forward to spring and the opening of the **aviary** where there will be a few new residents, including a pair of Chinese Hwamei and four new Nicobar pigeons. Due to HPAI (avian influenza), we don't know when the aviary will open, but when it does we will see you all there!

REGION NEWS—AUSTRALIA & THE ISLANDS



*Photo of Ellin courtesy of
Australia keepers*

Warmer days are coming, which means the **gibbons** and **siamangs** will be given access to the courtyard as temperatures allow. The keepers however are already in full spring mode. Over the next month, they will be working on getting outdoor habitats ready for the animals.

The **kangaroos** are currently in the barn but have access to the holding yard. They will remain in those areas until at least mid-March while the yard continues to rest a little bit.

Our **Tasmanian devils** have been having some social challenges. Keepers are managing them in two separate groups. The groups may change as they slowly start reintroductions, but it is likely that all three animals will not be viewable at the same time.

Due to HPAI (avian influenza), staff have moved all of our birds inside. The Roadhouse Aviary in the nocturnal building is also closed presently as a precautionary measure.

Lorises are in the back again. Keepers are working toward a reintroduction to the public viewing area but that may not happen until the building is closed for construction. Stay tuned for updates.

Matschie's tree kangaroo Luka is doing well in the public aisle. Thank you so much to all the docents who helped watch her during her introduction to the habitat.



*Photo of Luka courtesy of
Cindy Wesney*

REGION NEWS—CONGO EXPEDITION

The **colobus monkeys** continue to do well! We have a new little addition to our troop. Jabari gave birth to a healthy boy on Jan. 15. This is the first offspring for the Jabari-Sekani pairing and the first offspring for Sekani! Bernadette and Claire are taking turns allo-parenting and doing well. The Congo team has decided to go with a peanut theme and, therefore, named the infant Jif. Jif is growing fast and already spends time around the chute or inside of the nest boxes by himself when he can. As is typical with colobus males, Sekani does not interact with him yet but he does respond when the infant vocalizes. Then, the girls promptly let him know that it's not his job to do so.



As you may remember from a previous update, the team suspected that Bernadette was pregnant and they were correct. Unfortunately, the baby was born breech and did not survive. Bernadette is doing well and it looked like the baby was full-term. Bernadette has been given an injection of Depo-Provera to provide her body time to recover before breeding is resumed as the goal is to keep the entire group together.

Not much to report regarding **leopards** Jaime and Tyrion. They have access outside if it is above 32 degrees unless conditions are too icy. Tyrion currently weighs about 130 pounds and Jaime is right around 120 pounds.

Mandrills are doing well. Mosi is constantly changing in his appearance. He often secludes himself somewhat away from the girls as he is in a maturing state. This is typical of his age. Matilda, Malaika and Hasina are also doing well. Often, they are together in the back (off view). Matilda is usually the most dominant but Malaika is testing the waters so, socially, there are some dynamic changes happening among them.



Red river hogs Harold and Harriet have been reunited after spending six weeks apart due to Harriet's recovery from surgery. They are really enjoying being back together and having a sleeping buddy.

Nothing is really new with the **gorillas**. Maintenance is adding more hammocks to the off-viewing spaces since our gorillas have been enjoying them so much in the habitat. They are also adding more firehose runs and spots to hang enrichment.



Photos courtesy of Danessa Morrow

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As of Feb. 17, the **orangutans** are back in their new building! Keepers took advantage of the warm day and moved Dumplin and Sulango through the yard and into the building. Khali was scheduled for a checkup at the hospital, so she was returned to and awakened in the new building. The building is scheduled to open for public viewing soon. Keep your eyes out for an announcement of when they will be viewable to zoo guests in the new space.

Some of our **bonobos** recently had birthdays. Ana Neema turned 30 on Feb. 15 and Faith turned 17 on Feb. 19. We also celebrated World Bonobo Day on Feb. 14. There will be a more extensive celebration in April when there will be more visitors to participate. Despite those festivities, it was a very difficult month for the team as they had to say goodbye to Toby.

Toby suffered a stroke on Feb. 16 and never fully regained consciousness. Happily, his last day was full of contentment and play with his keepers as well as his fellow group members. While this loss truly hurts, he had an amazing life and was a famous ambassador for his species. Many visitors have sent in fond memories of Toby sitting in front of the glass. It is heartwarming to know the impact he had on our community. The team did give the other group members a chance to say goodbye to Toby after he passed. At this time, they seem to be doing okay.

Damisi **okapi** was recently fully sedated for a dental procedure to evaluate her teeth and receive dental work. Everything looked good for the most part! While she was sedated, Care staff took the opportunity to trim her hooves, take jaw x-rays, collect blood and do a skin biopsy. The procedure as a whole went incredibly smoothly and involved all members of the vet staff. Damisi recovered very well but developed a reaction to one of the injections she received under anesthesia about a week later. She had significant swelling in one of her shoulders and limbs but, because she is such a cooperative gal, keepers and vet staff were able to ultrasound the swollen area as well as provide laser and ice pack treatments daily until it resolved. El Jewar and Miliki are doing great. Everyone has been enjoying any chance for some warm air from outside whenever possible.



Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

REGION NEWS—HEART OF AFRICA

On nicer days when temperatures are in the 40s, our hoofstock is given access outside to their holding yards, which they are loving.

Lions have outdoor access daily as long as temperatures are above 10 degrees. The **vervets** were even given access outside on Feb. 9 when it was 45 degrees.

All of the **giraffes** are doing well. The keepers love having everyone living together as one big herd. Throughout the tour season, the giraffes have definitely been happy to see those buckets full of lettuce. The beginning of March will mark the end of the tours for now as the focus will be shifted to getting everything prepared for spring introductions to the Savanna. It may seem hard to believe but it will be here before we know it!

Outside of the animals, there are also some updates with the Animal Care staff. Regrettably, Heather Sinn and Justin Pope have left us. Heather's last day was Feb. 13 and Justin's was Feb. 27. Both are pursuing their passions outside of the zoo field. Heather and her wife have purchased a farmer's market in Springfield, OH (where they currently live). Meanwhile, Justin has the opportunity to go back to school for his master's. In addition, prior to starting at the Zoo, Justin was meant to play professional football. However, COVID hit and those dreams were diminished because of all the uncertainty that came with the beginnings of the pandemic. Now, two years later, he has been approached by some scouts/recruiters and once again has the opportunity to play football with the chance to go pro. We are terribly sad to lose him as well as Heather but are so very happy for them at the same time!



Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

REGION NEWS—NORTH AMERICA

Swans Sloane and Georgeanne are doing well and were vacationing in the flamingo habitat until recently due to their ponds freezing over. They have since been temporarily moved off view as we are seeing incidences of avian flu in Ohio.

The cows, goats and sheep in **My Barn** are all doing well. Sadly though, Winnie (goat) had to be euthanized about a month ago because of a tumor surrounding her heart. The barn yard is getting ready to open up for weekends only starting in March!

All is well with the **Mexican wolves**. Keepers are continuing to watch pack dynamics as they navigate our pups growing into adult wolves.

Banjo **pronghorn** is doing well as are the **bison**.

The **beavers** are also getting along just fine. Both seem to be a little more active as a result of the cooler weather. Zucchini is the one you will see in the glass viewing den; Acorn prefers to spend her time in the den box at the back of the habitat.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

an icon in the department and thrived in his retirement home by the Bear Kitchen for the last four years. He always greeted anyone who would listen with calls for attention and food. He will be sorely missed.

No changes with the **lynxes**.

Stevie and Joan **black bears** are doing well. They are choosing to stay inside more as the weather continues to be cold.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Otters Paso and Catori are fine and dandy but getting older. Therefore, they usually have access inside. On the nicer days we've had though, they spent quite a bit of time outside.

Nothing new to report with the **eagles**. Although the Dr. Bernard Master Aviary is typically quiet in the winter, it is especially so now that the birds have been moved inside with the threat of avian flu looming. Stay tuned for updates concerning the reopening of the aviary.

Montana **bobcat** was humanely euthanized in late January after suffering complications due to age-related issues. He was

Cougars Goldie, Poppy and Captain Cal are growing fast. Poppy and Goldie both weighed 90 pounds and Cal weighed over 100 pounds in February. Cal had surgery at the end of January for ongoing issues related to the injuries he sustained as a kitten from a wildfire. He is healing and is now back with his girls.

Alvar and Guillotine **wolverines** were separated for a few months as everyone was hopeful that Gui was pregnant. The hope materialized into reality when she gave birth in late January but, unfortunately, the kits did not survive. Gui was a first-time mom, so that outcome is definitely not unusual. She showed good maternal instinct and her Care team is optimistic about the future! Alvar will hopefully be moving back over and joining her in the coming weeks.

The **sandhill cranes** are doing well but have also been moved inside in response to avian flu.

Strawberry **moose** weighed 457 pounds as of Feb. 16. Sadly, we lost Bertha moose at the end of January. She was suffering from severe pneumonia and was humanely euthanized.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

All of the **reindeer** girls are doing well and have lost their antlers (Abby still has a piece of hers). In other news, reindeer tours have started back up.

The **prairie dogs** are sleeping the winter away in their burrows.

Our **arctic foxes** are doing well and love hanging out on their platforms.

Brown bears Brutus and Buckeye are still hunkered down in their dens and **polar bears** Anana and Aurora continue to do well together.

REGION NEWS—SHORES

Penguin Chirriante passed away from an age-related illness toward the end of February. He was almost 30 years old, which is well over the median life expectancy of 17 years. Staff will miss him so very much.

Physical exams were done on all of the **manatees**. Here are their most current weights in pounds:

Stubby – 2,333

Squirrel – 464

Scampi – 595

Acorn – 632

Einstein – 540

Lizzo – 352

Cardi-tee – 331

MaryKate – 330

Ashley – 342

A **cownose stingray** pup was born in Stingray Bay and has been moved to a back holding tank in Discovery Reef to grow.

Currently housed in the Asia Quest Building



L to r: Kami, 8 year old reticulated python; Jackie, 10 year old reticulated python; Minotaur, 10 year old water monitor



L to r: Burmese mountain tortoise; Aldabra and radiated tortoises

Photos courtesy of Peggy Heffelmire

REGION NEWS—THE WILDS

The Wilds has no big animal news for this report but they are excited to announce that Dr. Parker Pennington has arrived to begin her new role as Operations Manager for the American Institute of Rhinoceros Science. The Wilds is the home base for this multi-institutional research collaboration. This project is being funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and will focus on the main challenges to rhino management in human care, including rhino physical fitness, well-being, reproduction and iron overload.



Photo courtesy of Bonne McGowan